



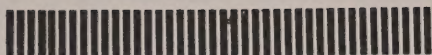
messing about in BOATS

Twice a Month

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messing about in BOATS

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OUR GUARANTEE: IF AT ANY TIME YOU DO NOT FEEL YOU ARE GETTING YOUR MONEY'S WORTH, LET US KNOW, WE'LL REFUND YOU THE UNFULFILLED PORTION OF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENT.

Our Next Issue

... will go into the mail right around Labor Day weekend. Subscriptions received prior to then will start with that issue (#9) unless requested otherwise.

... will feature quite a bit about kayaking, ocean kayaking, as we expect to be at the Sea Kayak Symposium organized by CANOE magazine in Castine, Maine in early August. We've never tried this before, should be interesting. The program includes a two day presentation on various aspects of sea kayaking, both as talks/lectures and on-the-water demonstrations. We also get to try out many different kinds of kayaks. Let me at 'em! Seriously, it should be a concentrated introduction to the lure of this sort of messing about in boats.

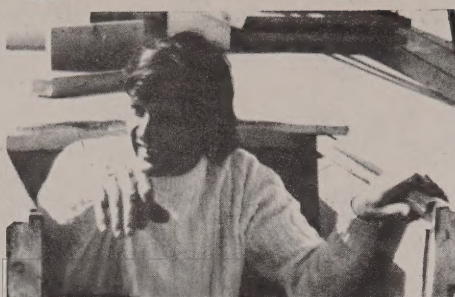
Having Trouble

... receiving MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS? If you miss an issue, or get one mangled in the mails, or otherwise not in satisfactory condition, please let us know, we'll send you out a replacement. They all leave here in good shape, but we can't control what happens to them in the postal system.

On the Cover

... rows of the real runabouts gleam in the sun at the Antique & Classic Boat meet on Lake Winnepesaukee, NH.

Commentary



BOB HICKS

It happened that in late July on two successive weekends, the people who own the old yachts and motorboats of yesteryear had two gatherings. At Mystic Seaport the antique and classic boat rendezvous attracted about 40 of the larger sort of old motor and sailing yachts. At Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire, the Antique & Classic Boat Society hosted their major gathering of the year for their predominately mahogany runabout owners. The latter did include a few large boats but it was overwhelmingly speedboats in row upon row. So we had a chance to look into this way of messing about in boats, pretty much from an outsider viewpoint. The two events are featured in this issue.

We have more than just a spectator interest, for amongst the eight boats in the "collection" here (mostly much in need of lots of restoration) is a 1941 Chris Craft 17' Special Runabout, bought two years ago by chance when it came to our attention at a bargain price. It's eminently restorable, and since we intend to do the work ourselves, it's not yet restored. That's the way it goes in boats. So, viewing these boats was a preview of how we will someday become participants also.

I know that many, many people in boats have quite narrowly defined interests. That's okay, they probably have boats always in useable condition and aren't spread out over so broad a field of interest that they get bogged down. I don't happen to be one of them, I keep finding yet another interesting sort of boat I'd like to get involved with. Some sort of restraint has to be exercised or things would get really out of control. Not financially, for I've found you don't need really big money to get into too many interesting boats. Even amongst the glitter of these antique and classic boats we viewed at the meets covered in this issue were rather nicely done small craft with less than \$5000 invested in them. That's not a lot of money by today's standards for recreational pursuits. It's serious money, sure, but not major money.

Well, this sort of "buffet" interest we seem to have is what led to doing this newsletter. Most of the narrower boating interests have already got publications that focus just on the activity in hand, be it sail, canoe, outboard,

trailer boat, yacht racing, etc. You read any one of the specialized publications and you find out a whole lot about a very narrow field of interest. If you have a broader inquisitiveness, this means buying several publications. Maybe SMALL BOAT JOURNAL and WOODEN BOAT cover broader fields, within the limits of their own self imposed interest areas.

Well, our self imposed interest area is geographical, New England and adjacent New York and New Jersey, a small area with a high density of boating activity in all sorts of ways. And, we like to report on the variety of ways that this activity is going on, those that interest us. With this sort of focus we can also get involved with "ordinary people" who have interesting ways of messing about in boats. We can pick up on so much that doesn't fit into the format of serious major special interest magazines.

By making the focus narrow geographically, we can make it broader in terms of special interests. We like to think that people who build or row a nice pulling boat are still interested in how the antique runabout enthusiast does his thing. The common thread is the degree of enthusiasm and commitment to the challenge and pleasure of building, owning and using interesting boats. Maybe you'd never want a nice old fantail steam launch, but I'll bet you find it hard not to notice one if it comes to your attention. And then want to know more about the guy who it belongs to.

There are limits to what I consider "interesting." I just cannot get involved with the mass consumer boats, not because they are fiberglass but because they are dull. To me, not to their owners. To me they seem like so many automobiles, or Winnebagos even, afloat. The pitch for performance and accommodation and easy maintenance sounds just like automotive advertising. To me a car is just something to use, like a stove or a refrigerator. Unless, maybe it's a 1941 woody wagon. Whoops, there's that nostalgia thing creeping in. Nostalgia seems to be fundamental to many of the sort of boats I find interesting. It fuels serious magazines like WOODEN BOAT. The pull of the past with what now appears to be its simpler pace of life has a lot to do with messing about in boats, in my view.

What's happening...

AUGUST 26-28: ANTIQUE & CLASSIC BOAT SOCIETY MEET, LAKE GEORGE, NY.

We have been unable to obtain any detailed information about this event from the Antique & Classic Boat Society.

AUGUST 28: 9TH ANNUAL GREAT DORY RACE (OPERATION SHORT SHIPS), ROCKPORT, ME.

Organized by Bill Gribbel of Rockport, this affair consists of two rowing races. A short sprint of about 2 miles will be first. Then a longer ocean race of about 7 miles will go off, not necessarily across the bay. The course will be announced at the skippers' meeting at 8 a.m. Start, finish, and meeting all take place at the Rockport Boat Club.

A sailing regatta and picnic (bring your own lunch) will be led by Sam and Sue Manning during the races. Afterwards there will be a chicken roast picnic at Beauchamp Point organized by Jim and Meredith Martin.

Entry to this event should be sent to Bill Gribbel, Box 45, Rockport, ME 04856. Fee is \$5 for a boat and up to three crewmembers. More than three crew are \$2 additional each person.

ADIRONDACK CANOE CLASSIC, SEPTEMBER 3,4,5, SARANAC LAKE, NY.

A three day, 90 mile paddling race through the Adirondacks. The start will be at 8 a.m. on the 3rd at Old Forge, participants will travel 35 miles on this first day to just north of Long Lake. The second day's route is 30-1/2 miles taking paddlers to Axton-Corey near Tupper Lake. The final day's run is 24 miles to Riverfront Park on Saranac Lake. Each night dinner and overnight camping will be arranged. On the evening of the 2nd participants will gather at Old Forge for race information and a pasta dinner. At the finish three days later the participants will enjoy a barbeque.

As of this announcement (July 19) over 125 boats have been entered. The race is open to canoes, kayaks and guideboats for serious racers as well as a recreational tourer class. Entry blanks and further information are available from the Saranac Lake Chamber of Commerce, 30 Main St. Saranac Lake, NY 12983. Phone is (518) 891-1990. Entry fee is \$10 per person per boat. Registration is requested prior to August 29th. After that date, until 10 p.m. on September 2nd, registrations will be accepted at \$15 fee.

SEPTEMBER 10 & 11: STEAMBOAT GATHERING, MOULTONBORO, NH.

The live steamers' own gathering, a two day festival of steamboating at Lee's Mill in Moultonboro, NH on Lake Winnepesaukee, all day both days.

SEPTEMBER 24 & 25: MAINE TSCA SMALL CRAFT IN THE WATER MEET, CHRISTMAS COVE, ME.

An annual gathering of small craft owners and enthusiasts at beautiful Christmas Cove near So. Bristol, south of Damariscotta. Saturday gathering and boat tryouts, Saturday night dining at adjacent restaurant. Sunday morning local cruise. To receive mailed instructions and information you can write to Shew & Burnham, P.O. Box 131, So. Bristol, ME 04568.

SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 2: CANOE BUILDING COURSE, CRAFTSBURY COMMON, VT.

This is a bit early of an announcement, but if it is something you might care to do, it would require advance arrangements. The Sterling College in Craftsbury Common will run this nine day canoe building course for a small group of interested persons. A similar course successfully was completed in May, in which four persons took part. The course includes morning construction work at Strong's Canoe Yard, afternoon local paddling in preparation for a final four day expedition to provide experience in lake paddling, portaging and white water. The fee is \$525, which includes room and board for the stay on campus and all camping fees and food for the canoe trip. Interested? Contact Ann Ingerson, Sterling College, Craftsbury Common, VT 05827.

THE SPIRIT OF MASSACHUSETTS

is beginning to take shape. Readers who saw our Issue #3 which featured the dream boat of the New England Historic Seaport will be interested to learn that the keel is in place and the stem has been installed (as of July 21st when we dropped by to check up on progress). Readers unaware of this project should know that this is a 125 foot schooner being built at the Charlestown Naval Shipyard to be Massachusetts' very own tall ship. Designed by the man who designed the PRIDE OF BALTIMORE, she is being built in traditional fashion out in the open at the Shipyard, and the public can drop in anytime during the normal hours the Shipyard (now a national park site) is open to view progress.

SPIRIT OF MASSACHUSETTS is going together not far from OLD IRON-SIDES. There is no admission fee, and if this sort of boat building catches your fancy it's worth the visit to look at the work in progress. The site is just off the Charlestown end of the Tobin Bridge enroute north out of Boston.

NATIONAL TSCA ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Traditional Small Craft Association held in June at Mystic Seaport approved the incorporation of the Association as a non-profit organization. Also approved were bylaw changes which govern the setting of membership dues and other administrative matters.

Three new members of the Council elected for three year terms are Ron Ginger of Framingham, MA, Bob Hicks of Wenham, MA and John Roche of Harwich, MA. The Council expects to meet at the Wooden Boat Show to elect its officers and review other issues facing the Association.

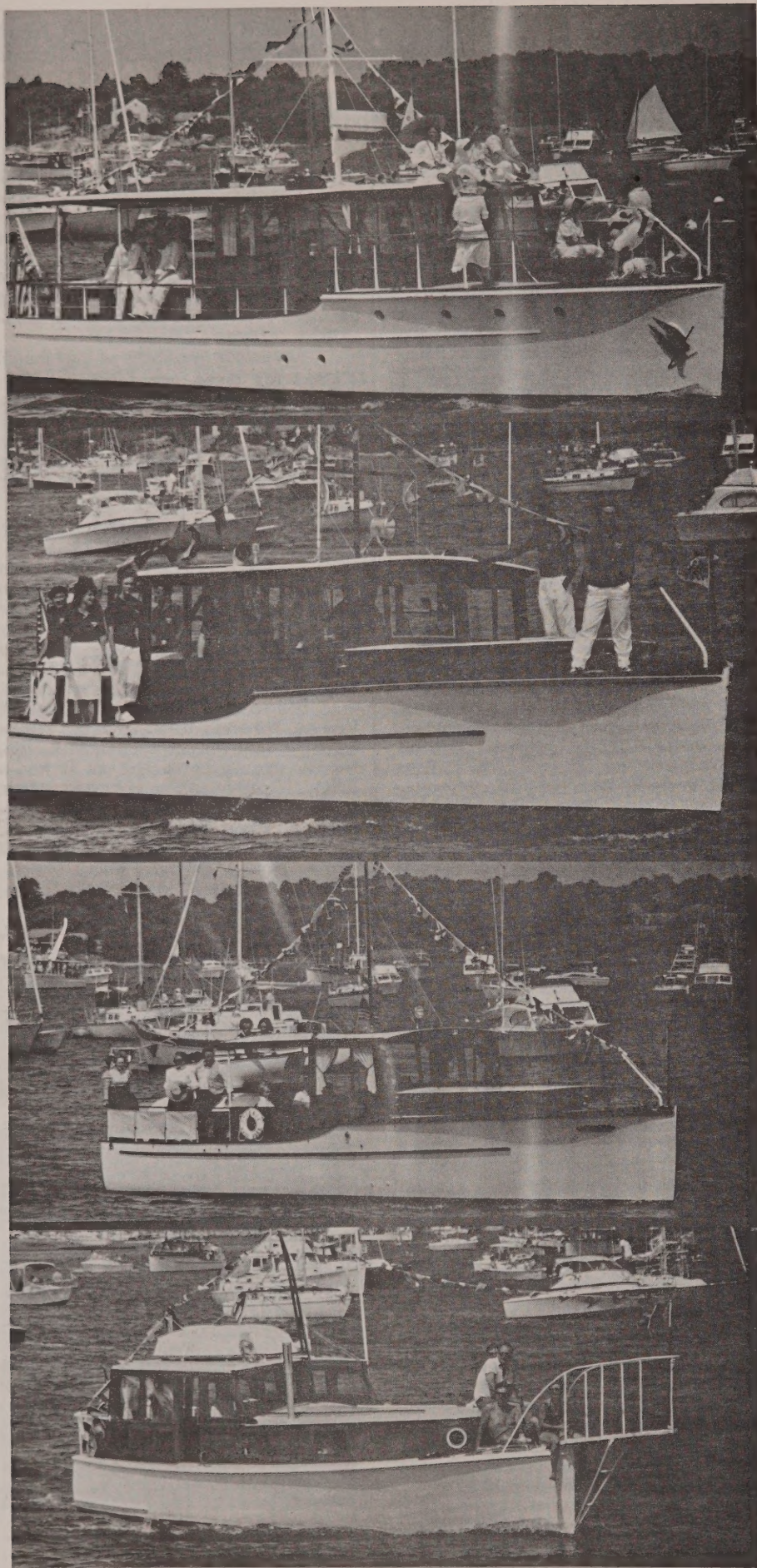
WIN A FEW, LOSE A FEW: Sometimes we have trouble finding out details on boating activities we learn of. Either the organizers are not interested in our listing their events, or they forget to respond to our inquiries. So we don't always get the information we'd like to.

Sometimes planned events don't happen. We went to Manchester, Maine in early July for the Steamboat Frolic, but no steamboats turned up. It was a lovely location too, somehow or other the organizers had failed to get involvement of steamboat enthusiasts.

Someone once told me that the CIA could learn a lot about covert activity from the organizers of some recreational activities!



DOING SOMETHING INTERESTING IN BOATS? LET US KNOW AND WE'LL PUBLISH THE DETAILS RIGHT HERE FOR OTHERS INTERESTED TO KNOW ABOUT.



Mystic Seaport's Rende

Even though the ARGO was 76 feet long and resembled in some ways a modest ferryboat, the owner sounded no different than someone who was showing off a refurbished 12 ft tender. Mrs. Roland Stearns was happy to talk about her boat, just back from the antique and classic boat parade down the Mystic River from the Mystic Seaport to Noank and back. ARGO was one of some 40 boats gathered for the occasion.

"Yes, we scraped and sanded and varnished and painted forever," she explained. With her husband, she had acquired the semi-derelict boat from Bath, Maine where it lay, having been holed and beached. ARGO, despite her size, was built in 1912 as a tender for the 250 foot steam yacht, ALOHA, owned by then secretary of the navy, Arthur Curtis James. The age of opulence, ARGO was finished off like a mansion inside, though the rooms were small as they served as living accommodations for the paid crew of the ALOHA. The Stearns have opened out the interior for more spacious living, for they and their children live aboard at the 79th Street Marina in Manhattan, where they both are stockbrokers. In the depth of winter they go south, in summer they go to the Adirondacks, so in their own way they are emulating the earlier well to do folks who indulged in yachting. That they do so in the tender of the earlier truly imposing yacht says something about the nature of the times.

Well, this was all part of Mystic Seaport's annual affair for owners of old boats, boats built before 1940 and having on board living accommodations. The majority of the craft on hand on July 23rd were motor cruisers in the 35 to 50 foot range, but several imposing large sailing yachts also took part. Yes, this is a game for those with ample funds for fun, but not restricted to this way of messing about in boats arbitrarily. CALPURNIA, a 19' gaff rigged cutter owned by David Madacsi of Mystic was the smallest boat that qualified, and David is strictly a budget restorer. "Every year I watched this parade and vowed some year to enter," David explained. Now he had, and was welcomed too.

The highlight of the weekend of messing about in this sort of boats is the Saturday afternoon parade downriver to Noank and back. Led by the SABINO, the Seaport's steamboat, the boats proceed in stately splendor with the river sides lined with on land spectators and on boat onlookers in the jammed marinas along the 4 mile route. On the SABINO a five piece band plays '20's and '30's music, and various Seaport people and guests (and us lucky press types) enjoy the cruise. At Noank the SABINO ties up at the yacht club and the parade passes in review. The

Antique & Classic BOATS

folks who own the boats are vying for various awards, including one for most historically appropriate attire. This brought forth perhaps a dozen different efforts in that direction. Mrs. Stearns on ARGO stood in solitary grandeur on the main deck in her period dress waving gracefully to the crowd as her family, attired as paid hands, were up forward in the pilot house. Then there was TAR BABY, an absolutely gorgeous, perfect 60' John Alden schooner. Her plate glass varnish and gleaming black topsides were graced with a "family" of two generations decked out in summer gear, the women in gorgeous gowns, the men in striped jackets, straw boaters, etc. Other participants were similarly geared up in costumes, while still others cruised their period piece boats along wearing cutoff levis, etc.

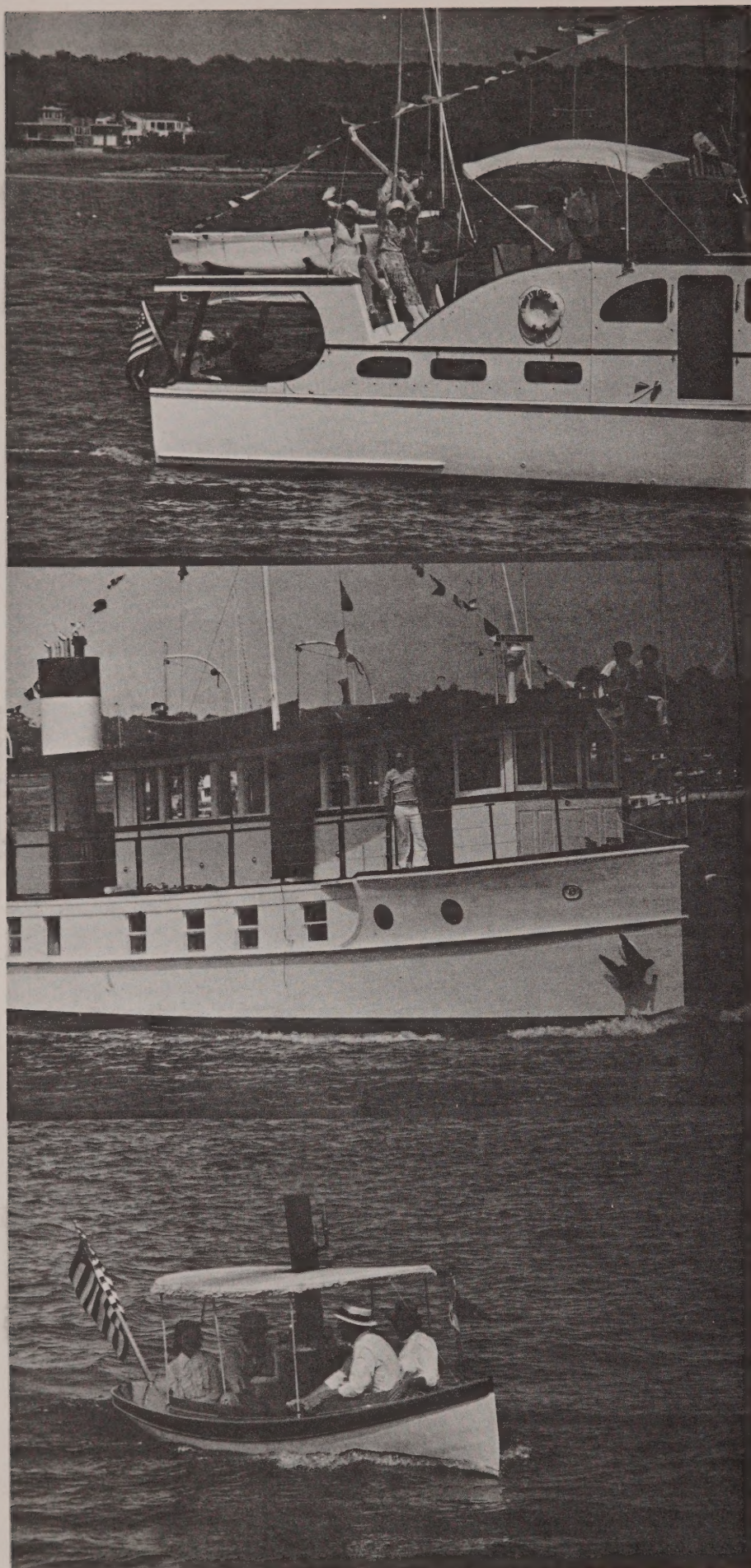
I guess the thing I liked about all this was that these boat owners were having a grand time. Certainly they had put much, much money into their boats, along with their own work in many cases. Completing the whole nostalgia trip by dressing up appropriately just made the whole illusion more complete. These were the boats of my father's generation, I can still see the drawings he made in the '20's on the flyleaves of his school books, these same plumb stemmed power boats with elegant cabins, tenders atop the lower rear deck roofs, canopies spread to shield the ladies from the sun.

This was my first closeup exposure to the classic power boats of 50 or so years ago. Like the cars of the era, they are all vertical and horizontal lines, none of this airflow stuff of today. The hulls are painted, but virtually all the rest of the structure is varnished. Lots of polished brass. Very large and impressive controls in the pilothouses. Rugs on the floors, sofas to sit on, the boats are summer homes afloat. You enter through doors, not companionways. The rear decks are verandas. It's hard to get a clear handle on just what the appeal of these is to someone like myself who did not personally experience that era, but again, like the old cars, these boats are sort of living antiques that one can do something more with than merely look at and admire. The pull of the past is there just as it is in an old canoe or dory or catboat, the price you pay to play this way is, of course much greater financially. We really enjoyed our spectator role that afternoon, and I think it is a fortunate thing for anyone who loves old boats that there are people with the money who want to put it into these restorations. And, we could see they were having a grand time, that's the best part of it all.

Report & Photos by Bob Hicks



The fleet gathered at Mystic Seaport's docks. Dressing ship, CORINEUS gets a washdown. Period attire on TAR BABY. TAR BABY's tenders are turn of the century varnished carvel planked beauties. The banjo band on FLORA entertained.



The Best

BEST SAILBOAT:

STARLING: 47' schooner designed by Starling Burgess, built in 1929 by Harvey Gamage in So. Bristol, ME. Owned by Robert Mautner III, E. Hartford, CT.

BEST POWERBOAT:

POKETANYA: 33' Elco cruiser built in 1933 in Bayonne, NJ. Owned by Tom & Pam Lazio of Fairport, NY.

BEST MOTORSAILER:

EBONY QUEEN: 50' topsail sloop motorsailer designed by Ralph Winslow, built in 1939 by Frank Jesse of Plymouth, MA. Owned by Duncan Syme of Norwich, VT.

OLDEST BOAT:

ARGO: 76' power boat, designed by Triumpy, built in 1912 by Mathis in Camden, NJ. Owned by Mr. & Mrs. Roland Stearns of New York, NY.

BEST WORKBOAT

FLORA: 56' former oyster boat is owned by Stuart Ingersoll of Essex, CT.

MOST IMPROVED:

LUAU: 40' coastwise cruiser designed by John Alden, built in 1939 by Robert Jacob of City Island, NY. Owned by David Poole of Groton, CT.

BEST NON-PROFESSIONALLY MAINTAINED:

SKIPPERESS: 35' Elco Cruisette built in 1931 at Bayonne, NJ. Owned by Howard Beach of New York, NY.

BEST EFFORT TO SAVE A BOAT THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN LOST:

ANNIE LAURIE: 60' cabin cruiser built in 1929 by Gray Boats of Thomaston, ME. Owned by Janice Schmidt of Mystic, CT.

BEST COSTUMED CREW:

DRIFTWOOD: 43' cabin cruiser built by Dawn Boat Co. of Clauson Point, NY. Owned by Carl Preuss, Patchogue, NY.

HONORABLE MENTION:

BELISAURIUS: 56' yawl designed by N.G. Herreshoff, built in 1935 by the Herreshoff Mfg. Co. of Bristol, RI. Owned by Charles Read of Edgewood, RI.

ORENDA: 75' yawl designed by John Alden, built in 1940 by Lawley of Neponset, MA. Owned by Richard & Jane Sage of East Hampton, NY.

TAR BABY: 60' schooner designed by John Alden, built in 1928 by C.A. Morse of Thomaston, ME. Owned by Carl Sherman of Westbrook, CT.

Top: DRIFTWOOD had the best costumed passengers and crew. ARGO was the oldest (1912) boat. This little steamboat didn't qualify (no living accommodations) but joined the parade anyway.

Antiques & Classics



The Real Runabouts and More

Photo above: A 1914 Laker sporting NH Reg. #ONE.

There were three sailboats on hand, one steam launch, several early motor launches and a few larger older cabin cruisers. The balance, and great majority, of the boats at the Antique & Classic Boat Society show at Weirs Beach on Lake Winnepesaukee on July 30th and 31st were mahogany speedboats, runabouts if you will. Kow upon row upon row of gleaming mahogany open cockpit craft with chrome trim glittering. The 30's, '40's and '50's were strongly represented with a few reaching back to just before World War I. Like one elegant "laker" built in 1914, sporting New Hampshire boat license plate number "ONE". Yes, printed out like that.

This show is a sort of static affair, the owners of all these lovingly restored old motorboats (and the three sailboats too) gathered to have their craft judged for appearance and restoration faithfulness. Also, they gather to talk to each other, of course, it's two days at the docks, talking and looking. A few boats come and go, but most of them are moored stern to the docks secured so as not to bump their neighbors. There is a really big crowd of rubbernecks too, people in the area on holiday coming to have a look at our past.

This whole business of owning restored old powerboats of yesteryear is very close to the classic car hobby. The boats are of the era during which most, (not all, of course) of the owners grew up, and many had recollections of these craft being commonplace. While the game has its prestige brands, it also has a heavy majority of Chris Craft, the Ford or Chevy of the times in motorboating. Again just like 1930 and 1940 cars, these once ordinary boats have acquired a desirability and consequent

value.

Motors are important in this game. Even outboards. To one side at the end of the dock were a dozen old outboards on display, the antique outboard club is a reality, and those who love the old outboards lovingly collect and restore them too. But, it's the inboards inside those gleaming mahogany hulls that command the real interest. Lots of Hercules and Chrysler Crown flathead sixes, 95 to 120 horsepower or so, in many of the more "common" boats, the 1940 and 1950 vintage speedboats. In the older and usually bigger, runabouts you get to see a big Kermath straight six or such. The people who repower some of these craft with modern marine v-8's do so at the peril of losing authenticity.

You Can Join In

If this subject of antique and classic boating has caught your fancy and you do not yet know about some existing organizations which cater to this interest, the following three groups might be of interest to you:

ANTIQUE & CLASSIC BOAT SOCIETY, P.O. Box 831, Lake George, NY 12845. The national organization.

ANTIQUE & CLASSIC BOAT SOCIETY - NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER, c/o Roy Smith, Wilton Ctr. Rd. Wilton, NH 03086. The New England branch of the national group.

CHRIS CRAFT ANTIQUE BOAT CLUB, P.O. Box 1386, Tallahassee, FL 32302. The Chris Craft owners group.

There are other clubs catering to certain makes, Elco, Garwood, etc. but we haven't come up with their addresses yet. Perhaps a reader knows and could send us on the information.

Report & Photos by Bob Hicks

Then, of course, there were the two Gold Cup boats, BABY RUMRUNNER a restored boat, ACE, a replica built by Jim Forrest of Amesbury, MA and featured in WOODEN BOAT a year or two ago. These boats were moored on the lake side of the docks and made several sorties during Saturday while we were there. THAT got everyone's attention. "When you hear this sound like an airplane taking off, you look up and it's BABY RUMRUNNER heading out," Dave had told us earlier. No wonder, that long slender polished mahogany cigar with its 12,000 brass screws holding it together had under the hinged decklid just forward of the tiny two-man cockpit right at the stern, a big Hispano-Suiza aircraft engine, an engine that powered World War I military aircraft and postwar U.S. Mail planes, and the barnstormers of the Great Waldo Pepper era. Now this monster engine, nicely done up in maroon and silver paint, drove this incredibly beautifully restored Gold Cup thunderboat for the pleasure of owner Mark Mason. According to our friend Dave, this had been a two year labor for him after repeated efforts to find a professional restorer to do what he wanted had failed.

Someone wanted some photos of BABY RUMRUNNER in action, someone with enough connection to interest the owner, not just anyone. So he got Jim to carry along the photographer in his ACE, the two racers pulled away from the docks attracting all eyes, then out a way and clear of the swarm of plastic outboards hanging about gawking, got on the gas and roared uplake, the spray flying off the chop in great sheets. Jim had wondered about keeping the camera dry. It's a wet ride at speed in a thunderboat.

So performance appeals. But so does elegance. Lovely "lakers," long narrow beamed boats designed to slice right through the chop without having to have really monster horsepower, with their elegant panelling inside the cockpits, the engraved stainless steel instrument panels, the authentic period upholstery, the gleaming polished "correct" engine on display with the hatches hinged back. The convertible top to keep off the sun. Buick roadster of the lakes, that's what they are. Just gorgeous. Even if you care not for motorboats you have to admit these craft are great.

And then there are the '50's era boats. Still in wood as fiberglass was just making the scene. Styled like the cars, even tailfins, swept around windshields, tuck and roll brightly colored upholstery. A completely different time. World War II clearly separated American ideas in recreational boats as it did in automobile design. The crisp, sharp straight lines and edges were gone, everything rounded over into voluptuous curves, not just the hydrodynamic parts of the hulls, the older boats had that, but the topsides finishing off. In this class were quasi-racers with tall tail fins over the rear deck covering the engines. One boat had a distinct resemblance to a '49 Buick rear deck, the bright colors, the use of plastics though the hull was still wood, the fins, the chrome grillwork. These too are now collectors' items, they've gotten old enough and nostalgic enough to appeal to some.

The steamboat, of course, always attracts attention. About 20 feet with a 5 horsepower motor, the usual big boiler assembly, the owner chatting with other elderly guys. Steam seems to have it's greatest appeal to the guys who were young in the '20's. But, everyone loves to look at one, it is fascinating, and unique, usually a lovely fan tail launch hull with a fringed canopy.

Amongst the ten or so larger "cabin cruisers" were a lobster boat finished off as a recreational craft, lots of varnished wood inside but still undeniably a lobsterboat with its vast rear working area, its weather protection half cabin providing shelter for that rear deck, and an unfinished restoration. Ron and Linda Largey of Leominster, MA are very active in the New England chapter of the ACBS and they had their GREAT ESCAPE there, partly varnished, no canvas on the foredeck, no portlights in the portholes, rear deck railing hanging free. This 42 footer was once the mail boat on Lake Winnepesaukee. "It's been ten years of mostly working on the bottom, all the stuff you can't see," Linda explained. Moored right beside GREAT ESCAPE was ESCAPE. She had been the Largey's boat for the past 18 years, finished and liveable and useable. Now she had been sold and work on GREAT ESCAPE was proceeding apace. To attend the 1983 show at the Weirs, they had shipped the craft up from Massachusetts on a wide load flat-bed, hiring riggers to do the moving. Dedication. And so much yet to be done!



Across the top: This Old Town lake rowboat was fitted out with an old outboard. The Gold Cup racer, BABY BOOTLEGGER got lots of attention. A single steam launch was on hand, that's 5 horsepower. And here a nice old one lugger make-or-break engine powers this elegant launch. In the middle: MERRY GO ROUND, a long, lean lovely laker type boat. Across the bottom: The veranda on this launch featured wicker comfort. Note the loud pedal in Jim Forrest's Gold Cup replica ACE, you really "put your foot in it," in this speedster. A big old Kermath straight six powering a laker. Isn't she elegant?

Just an unassuming little utility, but, oh, it was sad to let her go!

We were standing viewing the 1936 Chris Craft utility owned by friend Dave Peach when a couple of guys strode up, one began to tell about that particular boat in some detail, even mentioning he had a newspaper ad for it back in '36 when it sold for \$650. When he expressed a wish to know who the owner was, we told him we could arrange that, he gave us his card to facilitate contact with Dave. He was James Irwin, Jr., owner of Irwin Chris Craft there on the lake, long time Chris Craft dealers, he's president of the Chris Craft Antique Boat Club. No wonder he had all that info at his fingertips about Dave's nice little utility.

Obviously some of these boats are very expensive, the size, the make and model, the age, the high degree of quality in the restorations all speak strongly of lots of money spent. Not, perhaps, as much as on the much larger motor cruisers at the Mystic meet, but still plenty indeed. Yet, Dave's boat sat there admired by many for its superb restoration, despite its simple design. And Dave did the work himself over a ten year

period. "First I did it the way I wanted to," Dave explains, "But then I came to this show and saw how much I had done that wasn't authentic so I took it home and all apart again and did it over right!" That's the key, doing it "right."

Well, it was "right" alright. On Sunday afternoon when the awards were given out, this unassuming little utility model collected three awards, 1st place in antique runabouts under 22', best Chris Craft utility and best non-professionally restored. And, Dave also sold the boat. Yes, major family medical expenses had arisen and Dave was forced to put his boat on the market. He posted a small scrap of paper on the "Trading Dock" bulletin board, and one man saw it, removed it from the board so nobody else would see it, and then tracked Dave down. Right after collecting his three awards, Dave Peach took his prospective buyer out for a ride, and the deal was made. "Well, we went out in a blaze of glory, anyway," Dave joked. Obviously it was a sad necessity, but Dave expects to bounce back and will be looking for another old runabout to restore.

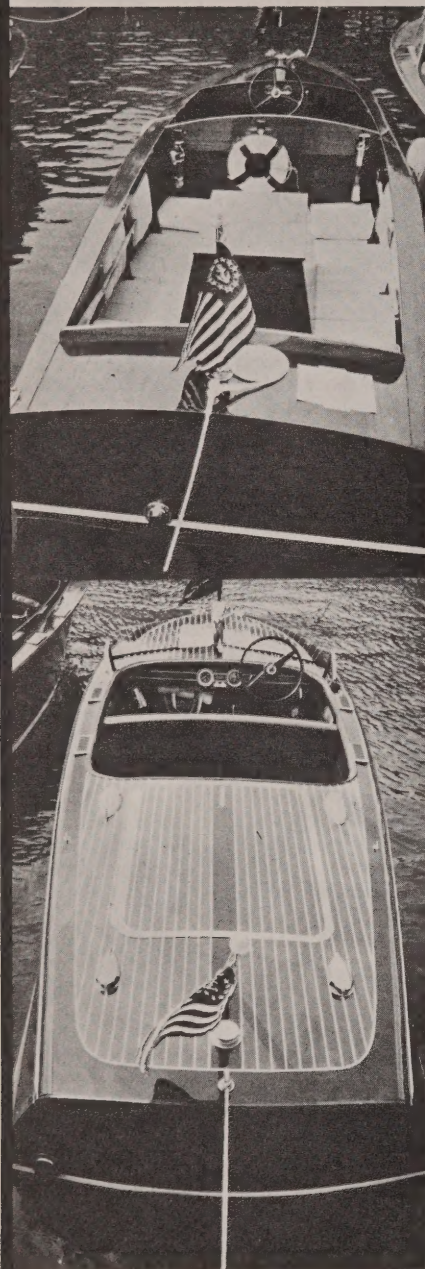
Here's one just like ours! (will be some day)

Hey, were we lucky. You might detect that my interest in the real runabouts is more than casual. Yes, a couple of years ago in a weak moment I bought a restorable 1941 Chris Craft 17' Special Runabout. And here on display was one just like it. A chance to see how it would look when done, a chance to note how certain things were put together, things missing entirely from the boat I had bought (it was cheap, and not complete). Remember that thing about authenticity? Well, when you cannot obtain any longer detailed plans or styling photos, but just old poster pictures, you have to be something of a sleuth.

The special runabout happened to be my favorite style, it was the convertible coupe of the time afloat. Up front behind the windshield, a front seat and a back seat, upholstered around the edge of the opening too. Right behind

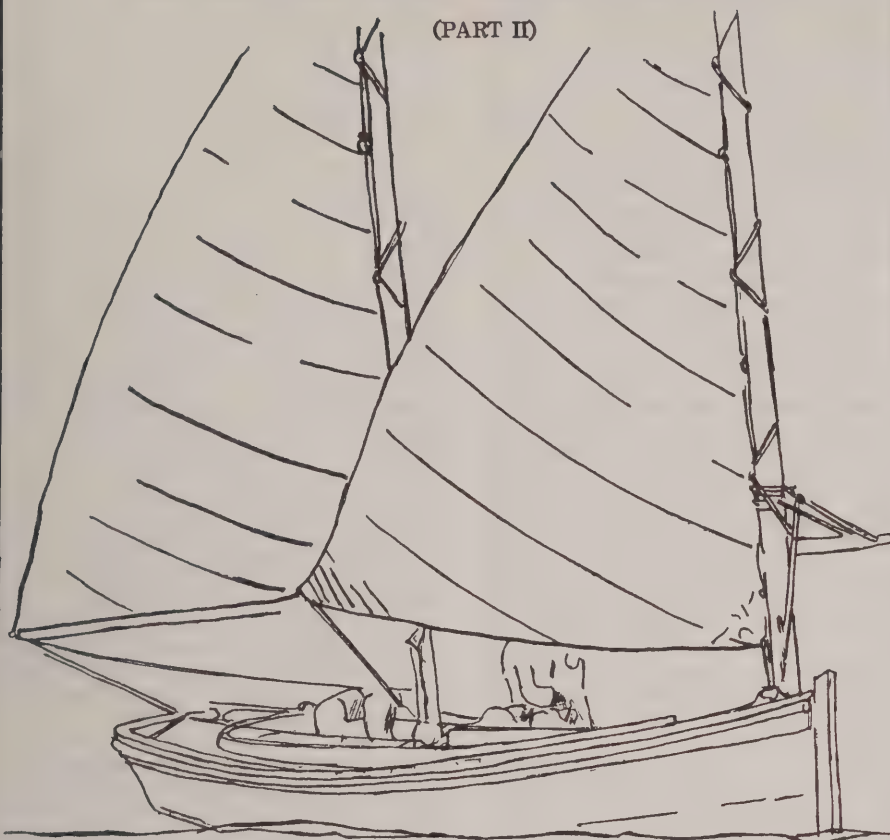
the rear seat the hatch with its chrome trim, under it that big Hercules 95 horsepower flathead six, sticking out the transom that 3" chrome exhaust pipe, that would, in time, emit that throaty burble of the big, slow turning four-stroke engine. None of that outboard whine and smoke. And, the original papers that I received copies of from Chris Craft (the boat still had its serial number plate) stated, amongst other things, that this model was rated for 38 mph. That's still pretty fast for a recreational runabout today.

And so the visit to the antique and classic boat show, as an onlooker, of course ends up refuelling the fires for finishing off the interrupted restoration of my very own real runabout. Where to find the time, where to place one's emphasis, that's the biggest obstacle in this game of messing about in boats. Isn't it, really?



PATINA

(PART II)



Story & Illustrations by Tim Weaver

First we had a blizzard that brought with it four days of January weather. Then it almost warmed up. Then it rained. At this point, I got sidetracked by a most attractive problem, colors. One of PATINA's nicest features is her sheer. It is a pleasure to the eye, embellished as it is with a false wale, half round rub rail and scuppered wash rail, all beginning just abaft the stem. The stem also had a fine forceful line. And the deck with its pleasant camber needed its say. And the same for the masts and rig. Here was a project worth imagining.

But, it needed to sit a while. My choices always seemed too harsh or too subtle until one day I remembered the pleasant skiffs common on the Out Islands of the Bahamas. They often looked so free and easy. I wanted that spirit and I knew my colors: At the sheer a tinted blue-green for the false wale and a smoky greyish brown for the rub and wash rails; for the deck the same blue-green as the false wale; for the masts and sprits the same grey brown as the rub and wash rails; for the floorboards, to relieve the moderately dark brown that already covered the inner hull, the blue-green of the deck; for the bottom a dark copper; for the sides and stem, white; and to add a flash of color and give snap to the overall appearance, a pink bootcap. It was not at all difficult

to get the colors I wanted. I simply went to the hardware store and bought tints to mix with oil base white paint, the only exception being the marine bottom paint.

Finally, by the second week in May, I had the weather I needed. I started to work. Refastening the side clamps and chines first, then planing the chines flush with their side planks and last, the re-planking. This re-planking, however, had me confused, especially as to the space to be left between the new planks when they went on. First, everyone had an answer but each answer was slightly different. Second, therein lies the truth, that is, a bit of a crack will do, a sixteenth of an inch or a touch less between planks an inch or so in thickness and six or so inches wide. In fact, this crack is no crack at all. It is the result of two planks wedged together so that their innermost edges are tight. This allows the caulking to make a slight indentation in the wood when driven in helping to lock it in place when the planks swell in the water.

When I first realized this, I was just a little unsure of myself so I made a try-square like gauge to make sure I was relieving each plank edge about a thirty-second of an inch. That plus a sharp jack plane was all I needed. In fact, I soon threw away the gauge once I got the hang of it. A sharp plane working

with the grain was quite delicate and precise, much more so than I had expected.

An unexpected pleasure crept into things. Choosing a board, planing the edge, bedding the plank at the chine and centerboard, wedging and clamping it at the chines, drilling and countersinking, soaping the screw and running it home with a brace, it all was a treat. Simple tools, a stretch of warm-enough afternoons, shavings flying quietly about the sun speckled shade, and the work coming out. Problems were a pleasure. A little more off here, maybe too much, well, there's a little extra wood so try again. Each evening found me, sitting with an orange and a cup of tea, enjoying the sight, a nice old fashioned skiff under a tree, a beatup pickup, saw horses, tools and the ever present 100 foot, bright orange power cord, and planning the next afternoon's work.

I've since reviewed that period with myself more than once. I just might have gotten along fine without that power cord. True, the power drill and saber saw made short work of time consuming and tedious labor, but, then again, it was a labor of pleasure, not of business. Looking back over things, a few days one way or the other would have made no great difference. This was especially true of the saber saw. There is, in my opinion, a smoothness with a hand saw, a chance to blend a line, that a power saw takes away. If a fellow can't hear himself think, what chance has he got with a minor aesthetic problem?

With the bottom planked, the next step was caulking, and I was a bit hesitant about that also. If I had to do that again I would put together a facsimile set of planks and practice on that. A bolted together practice setup is best, and is the method John Gardner uses in teaching caulking as part of his boat-building course at Mystic Seaport. With this self-teaching tool, one can see exactly what one has done, what works, what might not work, by simply unbolting the facsimile.

As for supplies, not every boatyard or marina would have them, but they were available after a little looking around. For PATINA, loose strand cotton caulking was used. Chapelle's directions were just fine. The wood, the cotton, the caulking iron and the mallet just liked each other. Each seam was painted with an oil base paint as it was finished. In the spirit of curiosity, a few seams were caulked, and completely so, with 3-M 5200, the same stuff I used as a bedding compound when I put on the bottom planks. A few seams were caulked using 3-M 5200 as soft seam compound over cotton caulking, but the majority of seams were caulked with cotton and traditional soft seam compound. The absence of white lead, I might add, made many of Chapelle's directions impossible to follow.

With the caulking complete, the keel was then bedded and bolted on with hot-dipped, galvanized, quarter-twenty-carriage bolts, putting cotton under the head of each bolt before it was driven

home, a recommended procedure. Trial and error taught me to drill holes through oak close to the diameter of the bolt thread, about a sixty-fourth less kept things tight, yet driveable for me. Next I painted the sides and bottom, but did a miserable job on the bootcap.

With the help of six neighborhood boys, I turned PATINA right side up. There she sat, basically sound, needing only a section of wash rail, a set of floorboards and a bit more paint. And with a boottop I could easily do without. At this point I was growing tired, tired yet aware that there were still a few "firsts" to come, amongst them the riddle of the rig.

Then some unexpected help and joy came my way. It came in the form of my son. He lives with his mother, except for the summers when he lives with me and works for the same company I do. School was out and he arrived. And PATINA, I can safely add, was not on his mind. Concerning her, he was a skeptic. He had seen her apart and that had been enough. But he had been hearing plenty about her from me and when I proudly displayed the new PATINA, he was impressed. With a four-day weekend coming up, he agreed to lend a hand for a while.

Well, I was ready when the time came. Scrapers, drills, sanding pads, saw, plane, countersinks, paint brushes, masking tape, you name it. First we fixed the wash rail, roughing out a piece from the leftover planking. Then, after showing Danny how to bed, drill and countersink, I left him to finish off the task. The rail, however, did not turn out as pleasing to the eye as I had hoped, largely because it had not been roughed out and pre-shaped carefully by me. But it was well bedded and solid and I was for letting it go. Dan, however, had other ideas. Hands moving gently but firmly with a plane, feet widely spread and shavings awirl, he brought that rail into shape. Later with a sanding pad on the drill, he blended the old and the new, and quickly. It was a nice show of skill. I then painted deck and sheer. The bootcap I turned over to Dan. He went to work with a fifty-nine cent brush and a roll of masking tape. He squinted and bobbed about the waterline, at one point looking at it upside down. There was just enough curve in that side to fool one and just enough left of the original scribed waterline to give one the idea. To translate that into an even width sparkling ribbon of paint was another thing as I had found out. But Dan did it and without using a ruler to check his line widths at any point. He created a line of fluid authority. It was the line of a gifted youth. That line was just right. Not too thick, not too thin. No waver, and the color, that pink, just stood right out. It sang a song, counterbalanced the blue-green of the sheer and was at home between the white of the hull and the old fashioned dark brown copper bottom paint. That ribbon of paint was a triumphant blast in a pastoral symphony. Just enough.

The day had flown by, and although Dan had liked the work, it was a long weekend and his friends were thirty miles

away. So, off he went, but he was hooked, and he had given my day a special glow.

Now the rains came again. Just as well, I thought, I was still tired and needed time for a little more rigging research. It was research with a history. PATINA had come with two beautiful sails, endless amounts of cord and line, two masts without sail tracks and two sprit booms, poles of no certain species that were each shouldered at one end with one drilled hole each in the other. And, absolutely no hardware, unless you want to call two ten foot lengths of nylon braid with sewn-in grommets "hardware." But, I had Chapelle. His section on sharpies was rather complete: His rigging descriptions likewise.

In fact I had filled my head with the terms and directions therein: Leg o-mutton, sprit booms to be properly shouldered, snorter roves, single sheave blocks, short horses, brails and more, and all to be properly belayed, mind you. At one point I gave up reading directions. I went directly to Mystic Seaport and examined the replica of the W.B. anchored off the waterfront. No luck. All I saw was a couple of feet of rope tied to each mast, I bought a magnifying glass, one with a built-in light, to more closely examine Chapelle's sail plans. I re-read his directions. I re-examined his sail plans. I made a model to practice on in my bedroom. I simply could not figure out what those oldtimers were up to, and the more I tried, the more confused I became.

I gladly abandoned the problem for the fun of the upcoming Small Craft Weekend at Mystic Seaport. I was planning to go with Dan and another friend. Well, that was the weekend of the great flood. My son and friend decided to put off their introduction to small craft, but I, like the Post Office, kept going. Gazing down from the thruway I saw homes and cars aflood as I'd never seen before. With resolve I drove on.

Those were two wet days. And not a sharpie there. Beautiful boats, all sorts of amazing stuff, I was clearly out of my league, but it was a great form of punishment. One could row any boat in sight, and I took advantage of that. Later, John Gardner held a workshop on half-modeling. During a lull, I cornered him. Told him directly of my rigging plight. He asked me if I knew if the mast positions were in their proper places. That much I was sure of. Then he told me to adjust my understanding of things to common sense. I was relieved. Snorter, single falls, close fitting eyes, gun tackle purchases, standing ends and much more fell from my mind's eye. In short I was going home, finish touching up PATINA, launch her, tie that sail to the mast with some cord, tie one end of the sprit boom to the mast and shove the other end into the grommet at the clew of the sail, tie a rope to that and sail away.

Meanwhile back under the tree, the flood had left its mark. PATINA was full of water. She was swelling. Just as well in the yard as in the water, I decided. And she had a few leaks after she had swelled, in fact she leaked a good bit at the inlays at the bow. I had to bail her,

strip the inlay seams of their caulking and let them dry. I did not like the width of those seams, they were much more than a sixteenth of an inch. Having been impressed with the bedding compound, I decided to use it here. It was supposed to caulk, fill a gap, yet remain elastic. That was the product's claim, and that was what it did. After that, PATINA was ready, except for the floorboards. The cheapest 1x12's available, a little more wood preservative and a few galvanized wire nails solved that quickly.

The next week was a busy one. Now definitely confident that PATINA would float, I went about the business of finding her a place on the water. I wanted her close to my apartment, the closer the better. Ten minutes away was a small cove with moorings and a small dock for dinghys. I was hoping to tie PATINA to the dock but she was too long. Over twelve feet she must be moored. So, the plot thickened. A dinghy was found. I liked that. Now there would be a coming and a going with each sail. The mooring gear bought and the harbor master, a must, met, and the mooring set as directed.

Most appropriately, PATINA was launched on the July 4th weekend. It was quite a day and an absolute thrill to watch her play at the end of her painter. A restless one she was. Danny and I tied her to the dinghy and rowed her to the mooring. To our dismay there was no breeze at all, so we decided to put off rigging and sailing her until the next morning.

And there was a breeze that day. Playing it safe, I decided to sail her with her winter rig, one masted and with the mast stepped just forward of the centerboard. The first task was lacing. The simplest way, and I've since discovered another, was to run the cord through the grommets at the luff, each grommet requiring a turn around the mast. The sail laced, the halyard was tied to the grommet at the head of the sail, the halyard itself having been run through an eye at the top of the mast before the mast was stepped. Then up the sail went. It was amazing how smoothly the lacing worked. No hardware whatsoever. Next came the sprit. It was shouldered (shoved) into the grommet sewn into the clew of the sail, a simple task.

Now the plot thickened a touch as the sprit boom had to be attached to the mast in a manner that would make the sail set flat as the sprit was forced aft. I took a piece of rope, tied a noose in one end (using a bowline) and then tied it to the mast (in the manner that a rope end is whipped with twine), the noose having but a few inches of free rope between itself and the mast. This left six feet of rope hanging free. The end of this piece was then run through the hole in the end of the sprit boom and from there through the noose at the mast. From there it was a simple matter to run the rope down the mast to a cleat directly forward of the mast. Pulling this line tight forced the sprit aft, flattening the sail. I then tied a rope, the sheet, at the clew of the sail and PATINA was rigged. No outhauls, downhauls or sail track bracketry here, yet a beautiful efficient little rig. The only problem left

was cleats. There were then and are now, never enough.

At this point my friend Kerry arrived. Danny, who had been patiently watching me rig the sail, rowed back to the dock for her. It was time to assess the situation. The mooring had been set as far away from other boats as possible, and purposefully so. There would be no need for any quick work here. The breeze was still fine and getting better. PATINA was prancing a bit with sail up, sheet loose and centerboard up. Danny returned with Kerry, and it was time, nervous or not. He tied the dinghy to the mooring, windward of the path we planned to let go on, lowered the centerboard and, as he let go the mooring line, I took up on the sheet and we were away. It was a gratifying moment. PATINA just gathered herself and was on a broad reach. She could turn on a dime, came about without urging and could sail close on the wind. And, she was stable.

The next night, Danny, Kerry and I tried two masts. And it worked, a bit more rope all about, double the shortage of cleats and still no need for hardware. clever lady nicely dressed and kicking up her heels.

That was the beginning of a summer of many a sail. And it was an education with all the focus, attention and reinforcement anyone could ask for. Danny wanted to sail every night, and we did, although I had to beg off exhausted from time to time.

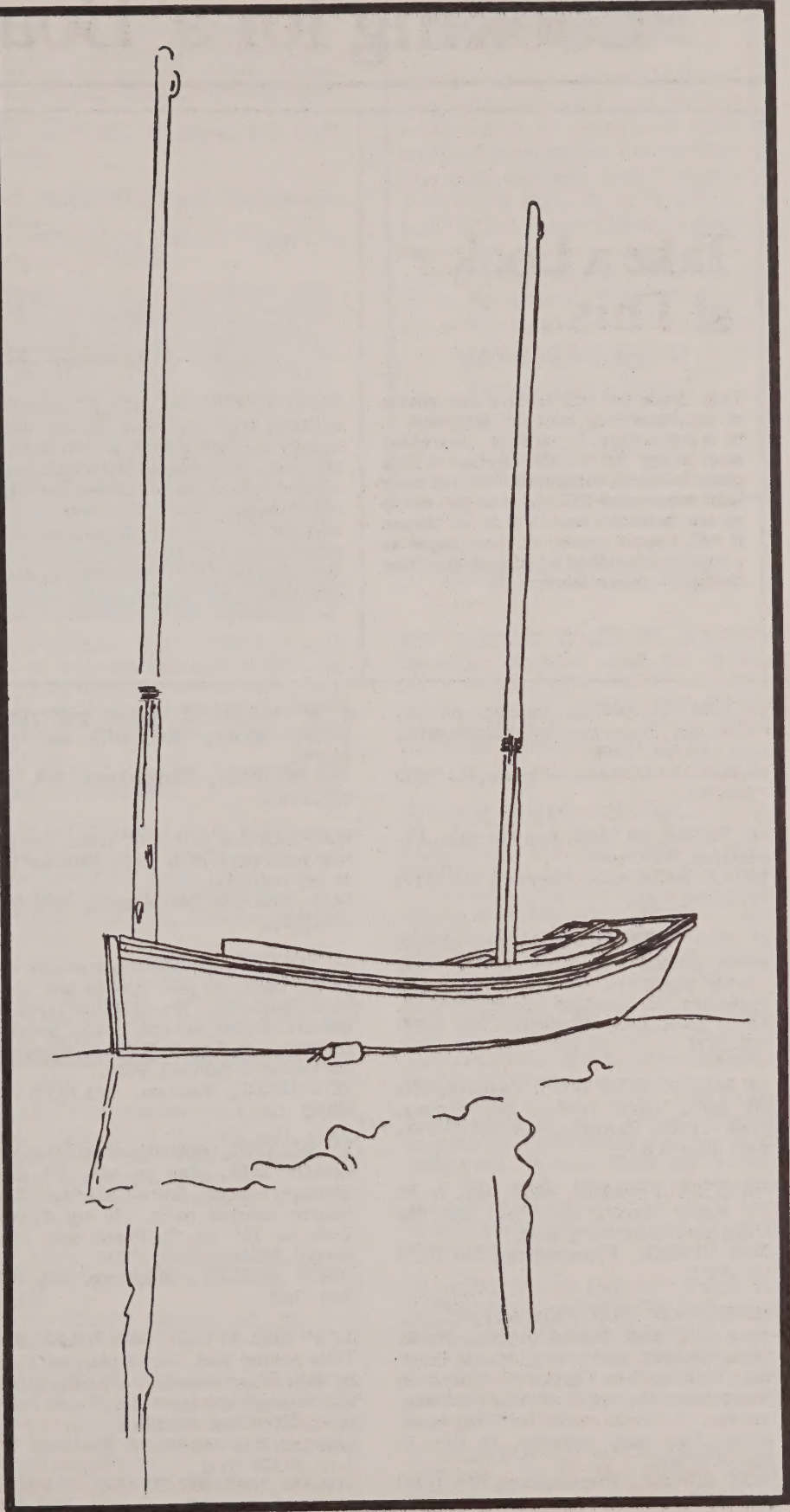
Give a youth a tiller and the liberal or conservative will emerge, and Danny, to my surprise, was a conservative. I realized I had, amongst other things, a conservative rock fan on my hands. He liked to go about things easy, and as his confidence grew, he began to like a bit more wind. For me that cove was a tricky spot, a bowl over which blew the wind. One could never be sure just what was ahead. It was easy to go from a broad reach to a run without being too aware of what had happened. And from that to a jibe was just a slight turn of the tiller. Or going along on a broad reach that just died, leaving the sails luffing. It took a while, but gradually he was keeping track of the wind, every few minutes bringing PATINA's head up to see where the luff point was. And, when things got a bit confusing, he always managed to turn into the wind. PATINA demanded her due. And it must be admitted that a nicer set of sails would have been hard to find. Made by Amy Drinker, they just did the job. And that sprit boom could give as flat or full a sail as one could ask for.

For me, the best part of the sail was coming in. At first I would make the mooring buoy, Danny would tie up and get things shipshape. Soon, Danny was making the mooring, I was tying off and he was making things shipshape. This usually happened at sunset, and I'd climb into the dinghy, search out my thermos and have a cup of tea. He'd take down the sails, sort out the lacings, halyards, sheets, sprits and wash her down. He was a youth engrossed, silhouetted a-

gainst a sky moving from pink to gold to silver and lastly, to blue-black. All the while, PATINA moved about a touch to the slap of the water, that special slap that water has when it plays around the

bow and stern of a flat bottomed skiff.

Danny certainly made that summer sing. We had stumbled upon a mutual pleasure. PATINA had brought me more than I had any right to have expected.



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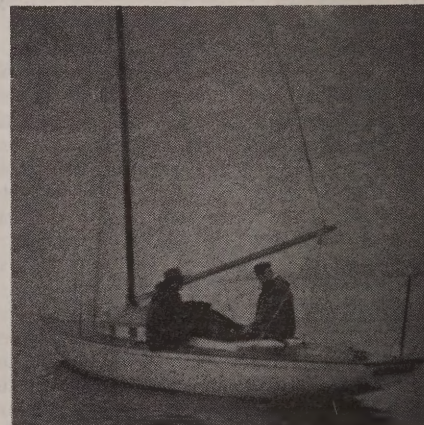
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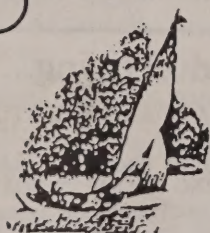
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